BULLETIN OF THE
TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasfield/tasfield.htm

Aug 1998 **Number 291**
Editor Andrew Walsh

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of backgrounds and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (03 6227 8638) for further information, or write to GPO Box 68A Hobart 7001. Bulletin or website articles to Andrew Walsh (146 Misty Hill Rd. Mountain River 7109, 03 62 664543).

PROGRAM

General meetings start at 7:45pm on the first Thursday of the month in the Life Sciences Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting at 10am outside the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance, Macquarie St. *If you are planning to attend an outing but not the meeting prior, check as to the timing of the excursion as sometimes unforeseen changes occur.*

7th Aug Peter Stevenson. **Geological aspects of Ground Water.**

9th Aug (Sun) Geology environs of Hobart.

3rd Sep Pattie Dalton. **Liverworts & Mosses. Bryophytes- the forgotten flora..**

6th Sep (Sun) Bryophytes along Gordon Rd, west of Maydena.

1st Oct Phillip Bethge. **Platypus.**

3rd Oct (Sat) A trip to Hastings thermal pool picnic area. Platypus are known to frequent the streams nearby, while quolls are sometimes seen during the day foraging for food scraps. Entry to BBQ & Pool is $2.50, or $6 for family.

Other Activities

The Marine Field Naturalists now meet at the Life Sciences Lecture Theatre at Tas. Uni. Usually at 6pm, 2nd Wednesday of each month.
Aug 13th Thurs. **7:30pm** Dr. Amanda Vincent. The international seahorse trade: its impact on Australia's unique fauna.
Sept 9th 6pm. A.G.M. and slides with talk by Brian Eldridge on his recent trip to the Galapagos Is.
Oct 14th 6pm. Prof. Craig Johnson. Understanding the dynamics of shallow reefs in Tasmania.
Nov 11th Barry Bruce. Recovery plan for the Spotted Hand Fish.
Feb 10th Mike Sugden. The reef day/night.

Threatened Species Day

A reminder that September 7th is Threatened Species Day. Parks & Wildlife will be organising a number events on that weekend, and note we will be taken a field trip out past Maydena looking at bryophytes on Sunday 6th. Contact Parks & Wildlife closer to the date for further details on other activities.

NEWS FLASH: ANOTHER FOX SEEN ENTERING BURNIE HARBOUR

Picture by Joseph Collins

For more information about the fox hunt, visit the following Internet site
http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/fox.html

Outing Reports

Mt. Field

March 8th

by Genevieve Gates

My apologies for this report not appearing in the last bulletin. My fault!-Ed.

The T.F.N.C.s March excursion was not what was advertised in the bulletin. The weekend trip to Orford was cancelled due to insufficient planning by the committee but hopefully we can arrange a weekend away later in the year.

I apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused. It is a good idea if members who don't attend the meeting prior to the excursion but are interested in the outings ring me on 6227 8638 and find out if there have been any changes of plan.

Sunday 8th Mar turned into a beautiful warm day as David had promised. Seven big people and one small person met at the Mt. Field car park and proceeded to inch their way (true fungi excursion style) to the Russell Falls.

Kevin's spectacular full length sprawls into the undergrowth to search for snails and other inhabitants of rotten logs and leaf litter brought polite smiles from the passer-byes.

Time was slipping away so we got a move on along the tall Trees Walk across the road and onto the Lady Baron Falls Track reaching the falls in time for lunch.

A leisurely stroll along the Tyenna River took us back to the car park.

We were lucky to find as many fungi as we did, given the very dry condition and the time of year.

Not being overwhelmed by a large number of different species, however, meant that we could stop and examine each in detail.

Many thanks to David Ratkowsky for leading the walk and sharing his knowledge with us.

Observations:

Fungi

Amauroderma rude
Geastrum sp.
Mycena sp.
Stropharia formosa
Lycoperdon pyriforme
psathyrella
Stereum sp. (Thelephore)
Fomitopsos hemitephrum (Polypore)
Ganoderma applanatum ("Artists Conk" Polypore)
Armillaria sp.
Lepiota sp.
Fistulinlla mollis (Boletus mollis)
Clavicorona aff. Pierata
Gymnopilus sp.
Coperinus arramentarius
Russula sp.
Mycena interupta
Bisporella citrina (Ascomycete)
Hypholoma brunnea

Snails

Tasmaphena sinclairi
Prolesophanta nelsonensis
Paralaoma caputspinulae
Trocholaoma parvissimia
Trocholaoma "spiceri" (Rare, 7 known sites)
Planilaoma luckmanii (1st record from Mt. Field)

Allocharopa legrandi
Ronlinella kngstonensis
Stenacaphia hamiltoni
Caryodoes dufresnii
Helicarion cuvieri
Cystopelta bicolor

Myrtle Gully, Collinsvale
May 10
by Kevin Bonham and Andrew Walsh
(This bit by Kevin)
The trip to Myrtle Gully was an extremely successful one for snail recording. In three hours, 14 species were found, many of which had not been recorded on my previous trips to the area. Three finds were especially interesting. *Discharopa mimosa* (which I found in a tree as soon as I got out of the car) has never been seen in the whole Wellington Range before. Just up the track *Roblinella roblini* was found under a rock- only the second Wellington Range specimen for this species. Most surprisingly of all, Amanda Thomson and I found six dead *Roblinella curacoae* in loose gravel and stones in a track cutting. Later I found two live *R. curacoae* under large dolerite boulders and another dead specimen under a log. It is very unusual to find *R. curacoae* in such numbers, and even more unusual to find it live at all.

(This other bit by Andrew)
Meanwhile, 10 people continued up the Myrtle Gully and walked to the top of Colins Bonnet. As the climb became steeper the forest changed from the wet mixed forest in the gully to the more open *Eucalyptus delegatensis* forest. Eastern Spinebills (*Acanthorynchus tenuirostris*) and New Holland Honeyeaters (*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*) were continuously heard and seen flitting around the forest. A Wedged-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) was observed circling around the top of the mountain as we reached the plateau below the summit. There we stopped to eat lunch in a small shed, which was a mistake as the clouds set in and covered the summit. We began the final ascent to the top, and gradually members of the group retired as the clouds became thicker, the air colder and the winds gale force. Four of us made it to the summit, where we spent 60 seconds taking photographs of each other clinging for dear life to the ice-clad trig station in thick cloud before we quickly returned to the shed to warm ourselves back up so we could begin the trundle back to the carpark.

Orielton Lagoon
Jun 6th
by Genevieve Gates
Orielton lagoon os that area water to the left of the Sorell causeway between Midway Pt and Sorell (as one travels to Sorell). Eleven T.F.N.C. members ignored the unfavourable weather conditions and met at the first bridge at the Shark Pt Rd end of the lagoon.
Priscilla gave a most informative account of the history of the lagoon and the struggle to have it classified as a Nature Reserve (Len Walls name was mentioned quite often during this).
In 1993 the blue green algal bloom drew much public attention to the lagoon and caused the local council to improve the drainage through to Pittwater. Surrounding landowners are also becoming aware of the importance on this wetland area which once covered a much larger land area than it does now, and they are changing their stock watering procedures in an effort to protect the area.
WE managed to identify six succulents (Specific halophytes), birds & bettong footprints and molluscs.
Find of the day goes to Robyn for a birds nest fungus which was growing amid the Sarcacornia bushes.
Many thanks to Priscilla for leading the excursion and also Veronica Thorpe, one of our members, who is also currently compiling two handbooks with funding from the Tas. Environment Centre;
1) Restoring Wet Lands and Waterways-A guide to action; and
2) A Wildlife Guide to the Derwent.

Obervations;
Halophytes:
Sarcocornia (Salicornia) quinqueflora
Sarcocornia blackiana
Suaeda australis
Spregularia media
Disphyna cressifolia
Hemichroa pentadra
Sclerostigia arbuscum

Birds:
Lapwings
Yellow-rumped thornbills
Forest raven
Native hen
Chesnut teal ducks
Pied oyester catcher

Fungi
Tricholoma sp. and a Birds nest fungus

Molluscs (thanks to Liz Turner at the Tas. Museum)
Cochlicella barbara (introduced)
Nassarius pauperatus
Cernuella vestita
Salinator fragilis
*Notospisula trigonel*la

Waverly Flora Park
Jun 5th
by Genevieve Gates

Four very keen members met at the Winifred Curtis entrance of the park at Bellerive to take a stroll over the areas that had been burnt six months previously (Jan. '98 bushfires).
We noted that ground cover regeneration was we underway. This included vast amounts of weeds such as fumitory and *Plantago coronopus*, but also a lot of native species as well, eg. *Helichrysum sp, Dianlella sp,Lomandra longifolia, Clematis gentianoides, Acacia dealbata, and Bursaria spinosa*. We also found a large patch of Greenhood orchids (*Pterostylis sp*) just about at maturity.
Fungal find of the day goes to Andrew for the *Cordyceps* sp (probably *gunnii*). These unusual club shaped fruiting bodies area attached to a host moth or beetle larvae which the fungus has parasitised; unfortunately the host body could not be found.
Remember the more people that attend excursion the more finds we make (especially fungal).

Observations:
Birds
Yellow rumped thornbill
Grey currawong Yellow wattle bird
Yellow-tailed black cockatoo

Flowers
Linum amrginale
Pterostyus sp.
Styulidium gramnifolium
Brachysome sp
Clematis gentianoides
Pimelia sp

Fungi
Laccaria sp
Agaricus sp
Xerula australis
Cortinarius sp
Galerina sp and other L.B.M.s
Cordyceps (gunnii?)
Mycena sp.
Collybia buryracae
Marasmius oreades

Platypus Field Work Experience

Philip Bethge, from the Dept. of Anatomy and Physiology at the Uni. of Tas. is conducting a project looking at the energetics of the Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*). He requires volunteer field assistants to help him with his work at Cradle Mountain. Accommodation, food and transport is provided and trips of 5-10 days is preferred. You will need to be fit and healthy. He has provided a list of dates, subject to change;

21/8/98-30/8/98	5/10/98-14/10/98
19/11/98-28/11/98	2/1/99-11/1/99
17/2/99-26/2/99	4/4/99-13/4/99
11/6/99-20/6/99	25/7/99-3/8/99
7/9/99-16/9/99	21/10/99-30/10/99
4/12/99-13/12/99	18/1/00-27/1/00

His contact details are as follows;
Philip Bethge
(w) 6226 2683
(h) 6225 4069
e-mail: p_bethge@utas.edu.au

Wilderness Society Slideshow

The Wilderness Society will be holding a free slideshow and guest speaker night on the first Wednesday of each month from August to December at Cafe Who, 251 Liverpool St. at 7pm. Sessions of particular interest to naturalists might be the August presentation on Marine Life-Our Forgotten Wilderness, and the December show titled Unique Flora and Fauna of Tasmania. Further details can be obtained from the Wilderness Society offices or shop.

Frogs & Fungi

Some of you may have recently heard news of a fungus, new to science, that is killing frogs and toads throughout the world. Here's the latest. The fungus belongs to a new genus of chytrid fungi, a group that is thought to be related to the earliest fungi. Chytrids parasitise a range of organisms, from microscopic algae to insects, but have never before been found to cause disease in vertebrates. As yet unnamed, the fungus coats the undersides and legs of frogs and toads, and has been implicated in the death of frog and toad species from locations in Australia, Panama, California, and from four American zoos and aquariums. Since the amphibians breathe though their skin, it is thought that chytrids suffocate the

animals. An alternative theory supposes that because of the infection, the animals are laying down extra layers of keratin in their skin which results in suffocation. Another possibility is that the fungus is releasing a toxin. However, the researchers don't yet know if the fungus is the primary cause of death, or is killing animals weakened by other factors such as UV radiation due to the thinned ozone layer, or agricultural chemicals. Further, nobody knows where the fungus came from or how it is spread. It is possible that humans, particularly those studying the animals, may help spread the pathogen between sites. Director of the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force at Open University in Milton Keynes, Tim Halliday, has issued a code of practice for field workers when handling amphibians. He says that mud and other debris should be removed from boots, clothing, traps and vehicles. Equipment should be scrubbed using 70% ethanol solution and disposable gloves should be worn when handling animals.
Source: New Scientist 27Jun1998.
Further reading: Alex Hyatt and Lee Berge *et al* will publish a paper about their research into the occurrence on the chytrid fungus on amphibia in Australia in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* this year (ca. July).

Competition

In this issue we're asking all you budding bards and bardettes (that's tiny bards) to put pen to paper and come up with some poetry. Recently published by Kangaroo Press was Ron Strahan's and Pamela Conder's An Incomplete History of Australian Mammals, which contains a collection of factual poems about our furry fauna. While essentially a children's book, it's and entertaining book for a naturalist of any age. This is the first and only prize for our competition, and we want you to come up with a **short** poem about your favourite Tasmanian natural history subject, so it can be about anything from an *Acianthus pusillus* (Mosquito Orchid) to a *Zizina labradus* (Common Grass-blue Butterfly-OK thats not strictly native to Tas). Hopefully (if we have room) all the poems will be published in the November issue of the Bulletin, and the author of the best poem will be presented with the prize at the November general meeting.
Conditions of entry: All club members and their families and friends are eligible to enter. One entry per person. Poems must be original and by the entrant. Closing date Friday 2 Oct 98. Judges will be Andrew Walsh and one other person from the committee (both whom will be ineligible to enter). There will be one winner who will receive a copy of Ron Strahan's An Incomplete History of Australian Mammals. Judging will be purely subjective and based on the criteria of "the one we like the most".
Send your entries to;
Poem Competition
A. Walsh
146 Misty Hill Rd
Mountain River 7109.

Example from Ron Strahan's book:
Platypus
The first *Ornithorhyncus*
Confused early thinkers.
They said, 'Oh good lord,
it's obviously a fraud!

'Somebody has stuck
The front end of a duck
(with the skill of a weaver)
To part of a beaver.'

'It's no less a fake
Than the mermaids they make
From a fish and an ape-
a ridiculous jape!'

We now know it's real
Though I can't help but feel
That from tail tip to muzzle,
It still is a puzzle.

Notice of Special Resolution

In order for our club to become tax exempt (because of the investment of the clubs funds) we need to add a new clause to the club rules. As such, the committee wishes to give notice to members that at the general meeting in September (3rd) we shall vote on a special resolution to add the following clause to our rules (the wording is suggested by the Taxation Department's Tax Pack for Clubs):

6.4 In the event of the organisation being dissolved, the amount which remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be paid and applied by the organisation in accordance with its powers to any organisation which has similar objects and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its members.